CLAIMS

1.   A method of providing a user access to computer resources on a target computer system, the method comprising:

under control of a client computer system, initiating a user request to access a desired computer resource in the target computer system;

under control of an interface component on a server computer system, receiving the user request and initiating a remote invocation of a user component object on the target computer system in response to the user request; and

receiving the remote invocation on the target computer system and, in response to the remote invocation, invoking the user component object to access the desired computer resource and obtain user information from the accessed computer resource, the user component object returning the user information to the interface component on the server computer system which, in turn, sends the user information to the client computer system.

2.   The method of claim 1 wherein a Web browser executing on the client computer system initiates the user request.

3.   The method of claim 1 wherein initiating the remote invocation corresponds to a distributed component object model communication, and the user component object returns the user information via a distributed component object model communication.

4.   The method of claim 1 wherein the interface component includes an active server page through which the user request is received and the corresponding user information is provided to the client computer system.

5. The method of claim 4 wherein communication between the active server page component and the client computer system comprises communication via a secure communications protocol.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein receiving the remote invocation on the target computer system and returning the user information to the interface component on the server computer system includes authenticating the interface component that initiated the remote invocation and determining whether the interface component has access to the user component object.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein the target computer system corresponds to a company's internal computer system and the client computer system corresponds to a business partner of the company, and the user request corresponds to business information stored on the company's internal computer system that the business partner is permitted to access.

8. A method of providing a user access to computer resources on a target computer system, the method comprising:

under control of an interface component on a server computer system,

receiving a user request to access a desired computer resource in the target computer system;

initiating a remote invocation of a user component object on the target computer system in response to the received user request;

under control of the user component object on the target computer system,

receiving the remote invocation;

in response to the remote invocation, invoking the user component object to access the desired computer resource and obtain user information from the accessed computer resource;

returning the user information to the interface component on the server computer system; and

under control of the interface component on the server computer system, providing the returned user information to a sender of the user request.

9. The method of claim 8 wherein the user request corresponds to an HTTP request received from a Web browser.

10. The method of claim 8 wherein initiating the remote invocation corresponds to a distributed component object model communication, and the user component object returns the user information via a distributed component object model communication.

11. The method of claim 8 wherein the interface component includes an active server page through which the user request is received and the corresponding user information is provided to the client computer system.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein communication between the active server page and the client computer system comprises communication through a secure communications protocol.

13. The method of claim 8 wherein receiving the remote invocation and returning the user information to the interface component on the server computer system includes authenticating the interface component that initiated the remote invocation and determining whether the interface component has access to the user component object.

14. The method of claim 8 wherein the target computer system corresponds to a company's internal computer system and the client computer system corresponds to a business partner of the company, and the user request corresponds to

information stored on the company's internal computer system that the business partner is permitted to access.

15. A system for providing a remote user with access to resources on a computer system, comprising:

a first server computer system including a plurality of computer resources and including a user component object, the user component object being adapted to receive a remote invocation and operable in response to the remote invocation to access a computer resource and obtain corresponding user information, the user component object outputting the obtained user information; and

a second server computer system coupled to the first server and including an interface component that is adapted to receive a user request to access a desired computer resource, the interface component applying the remote invocation to the user component object in response to the received user request, and the interface component receiving the obtained user information corresponding to the applied remote invocation and providing the user information to a sender of the user request.

16. The computer system of claim 15 wherein the user component object comprises a DCOM object.

17. The computer system of claim 15 wherein the second server computer system comprises a Web server.

18. The computer system of claim 15 wherein the first server computer system further comprises a firewall coupled between the first and second server computer systems, the firewall monitoring each communication between the first and second computer systems and permitting only communications that satisfy specified security criteria.

19.   A computer system for providing a user access to resources on the computer system, comprising:

a first server computer system including

an active server page adapted to receive user requests from a browser program, the active server page operable in response to the user request to generate a page data request and to receive page data responsive to the page data request, and the active server page providing a Web page including the received page data to the browser;

a component object wrapper coupled to the active server page, the component object wrapper translating data in the page data request into a second data format and generating a component call responsive to receiving the page data request from the active server component, and the component object wrapper receiving user data corresponding to the component call and translating the user data into page data and returning the page data to the active server page;

a component object stub coupled to the component object wrapper, the component object stub generating a remote invocation command responsive to the component call from the component object wrapper and being adapted to receive user data returned in response to the remote invocation and to provide the user data to the component object wrapper; and

a second server computer system coupled to the component object stub, the second server computer system including a plurality of computer resources and further including a user component object, the user component object accessing the plurality of computer resources to obtain user data in response to the remote invocation command and returning the user data to the component object stub.

20.   The computer system of claim 19 wherein the user component object comprises a DCOM object.

21.   The computer system of claim 19 wherein the second server computer system further includes a firewall component that monitors communications

to and from the second server computer system including the remote invocation commands and returned user data communicated between the user component object and the component object stub and permits only communications that satisfy specified security criteria.

22. The computer system of claim 19 wherein the first server computer system comprises a Web server.